

BATES NETS FOUR IN CALAMITY DAY FOR DEFENDERS!

By ARGUS

Wycombe Wanderers 6, Barking 4

ONE man's brilliance sends Wycombe back to the top seat of the Isthmian League see-saw. If this Saturday scoreline had read Paul Bates 6, Barking 4, justice would have been well served for canny Paul, who hammered in four goals himself, schemed a fifth and was the one bright star of as crazy a game of football as Loakes Park fans will see in many a season.

Barking were properly "up the creek" against an international-class display by Bates, full of spurts, subtlety and thunderbolt shooting, which made substitute centre-half McCarthy shake his blond head in despair.

But the game generally was scarcely a triumph for anyone. Wycombe, one of the elite Isthmians, and Barking, something of an "also ran" at the moment, looked like a couple of novice boxers, swopping furious punches, toe-to-toe, with all thoughts of defence thrown to the four winds.

Both, noticeably, had glass chins and were wide open to an enterprising attack.

The two defences were as jittery and fidgety as debs at their first ball. The Wycombe rearguard, undisputed saviours of the game at Bromley, were unrecognisable as the same heroes. Many a Wanderers fan must have thanked his lucky stars that Oxford City's front line wasn't on the field against them.

Goalkeeper Ken Brown and centre half John Fisher both had "shockers." Brown's nightmare of errors had a mournful ending when he dived too late to stop Barking's fourth goal, a long speculative drive from big Bill Blake.

Fearless Fisher became fallible Fisher on Saturday. Long John was all at sea with his covering and tackling and Barking's centre forward Cutting had only himself to blame for not cashing in.

DOUBLE TALLY

The agile, speedy Essex wingers gave the Wycombe backs plenty of trouble while

inside left Brian Lees slipped wandering Jimmy Truett to collect a breezy hat-trick—three of the four goals which enabled Barking to exactly double their season's goal tally!

Only Wycombe defender to earn a big hand was strong-tackling Johnny Weaver, who also scored the most enterprising goal of the match.

If the Wycombe defence creaked the Barking's ramshackle affair positively groaned. In one four minute spell in the second half it was wrecked by a three goal Wycombe burst.

It seems impertinent to criticise attackers who have scored ten goals in two outings but so poor were Barking that Wanderers ought to have had a dozen. Both Gerald Free and Michael Rockell made appalling misses.

Free, without fire and zest, had his worst game since entering the senior side but the lively Rockell, enthusiastic as ever, was a flat-out attacker who gave full back Lever no peace.

REVENGE

Barking's tiresome offside tactics gaffed Cliff Trott more than once—Cliff was to have a jubilant revenge—while Ray Howson played thoughtfully without the zip of his two-goals Bromley performance.

As for Bates—there was no holding him.

Two Bates goals, both beauties, gave Wanderers a 2-1 half time lead they just about deserved. The first was a show-piece, a cobra-quick dribble past three defenders and a crisp grasscutter into a corner of the goal.

Helter-skelter Barking should have equalised when Brown sadly misjudged a shot from Payne and laid himself out saving a drive from the rebound.

RABBLE

A reluctance-to-clear by Wycombe defenders let in Lees for a twenty-fifth minute Barking goal and until Bates put them into the lead again Wanderers looked a rabble.

Then, after several Wycombe movements had floundered in the off-side trap, Bates picked up a loose ball outside the penalty area, after Rockell had centred, and cracked home a no-nonsense drop which completely beat goalkeeper Sime.

An epidemic of defensive howlers led to a rush of second half goals. After both goals had had astonishing escapes, Lees took full advantage of Fisher's mistake to rush the ball into goal. Within a minute Bates' opportunism earned him a hat-trick. A sloppy back pass gave Paul his chance to rush in and score.

FLOOD OF GOALS

Then came a flood of goals. Weaver ran through like a hare to collect a Bates pass that would have delighted Euclid; the never-say-die Lees made it 4-3 straight from the kick-off; Bates retaliated with a penalty goal sixty seconds later, after a foul on himself, and then—the crowd dazed by this perpetual motion, Cliff Trott chased an astute Jimmy Truett lob to slam a sixth Wycombe goal.

Four goals in four minutes—and that was that, apart from some Wycombe misses bordering on the fantastic and Bill Blake's consolation goal for Barking.

Few defenders could have slept well after this performance.

Goals may make for excitement but in this game the forwards had it just too easy!